

CRYPTOGRAPHIC DATA PROCESSING SYSTEMS, COMPUTER PROGRAM  
PRODUCTS, AND METHODS OF OPERATING SAME IN WHICH A SYSTEM  
MEMORY IS USED TO TRANSFER INFORMATION BETWEEN A HOST  
PROCESSOR AND AN ADJUNCT PROCESSOR

CROSS-REFERENCE TO PROVISIONAL APPLICATIONS

This application claims the benefit of Provisional Application Serial No.  
60/203,409, filed May 11, 2000, entitled *Cryptographic Acceleration Methods and  
Apparatus*, and Provisional Application Serial No. 60/203,465, filed May 11, 2000,  
entitled *Methods and Apparatus for Supplying Random Numbers*, the disclosures of  
5 which are hereby incorporated herein by reference in their entirety as if set forth fully  
herein.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates generally to the field of data processing systems,  
10 and, more particularly, to cryptographic data processing systems, computer program  
products, and methods of operating same.

Signal processors and integrated circuit chips have been developed to  
accelerate cryptographic operations, such as public key operations. Examples of such  
chips include, but are not limited to, the Hifn 6500 available from Hifn, Inc., the  
15 SafeNet ADSP 2141 available from SafeNet, Inc., and the Rainbow Mykotronx  
FastMAP available from Rainbow Mykotronx, Inc. Despite the availability of  
cryptographic accelerator products, there remains room for improvement in the art.

For example, conventional cryptographic data processing systems generally  
use two main methods for issuing a command to a cryptographic accelerator: The first  
20 method involves the provision of a command register on the cryptographic accelerator

that a host processor uses to issue a single command. Once the cryptographic accelerator completes executing a command, the host processor may issue a new command. After completing a command, the cryptographic accelerator is generally idle until the host processor issues a new command. Unfortunately, the host processor  
5 may spend much time interacting directly with the cryptographic accelerator to download data and issue commands. This may reduce the amount of time available to the host processor for attending to other tasks.

The second method allows the host processor to download one or more command sequences to the cryptographic accelerator and then to instruct the  
10 cryptographic accelerator to execute one or more of the downloaded command sequences. After completing a command sequence, the cryptographic accelerator is generally idle until the host processor issues a new command. The size of the command sequences may be limited based on the amount of memory that may be placed on the cryptographic accelerator. Like the first method, the host processor may  
15 spend much time interacting directly with the cryptographic accelerator to download data and issue command sequences. This may reduce the amount of time available to the host processor for attending to other tasks.

Cryptographic accelerators generally perform operations using one or more operands. These devices may include general-purpose operand storage that comprises  
20 fixed length registers to store the operands and results. To execute an instruction, a register number is used to indicate which operand should be used for the operation and where the output should be stored. For example, if the operation were " $a + b = c$ ," then part of the instruction would indicate that "a" is in register 7, "b" is in register 1, and "c" should be put into register 2.

Because the registers are fixed in size and the operands and results are variable in size, the size of the operands will always be less than or equal to the register size. As a result, some of the memory in the registers may be wasted. This reduces the number of operands that may be stored on a chip in a given amount of space. In addition, if the cryptographic accelerator is redesigned to accommodate larger  
25 operands, then each of the registers may need to be modified. More registers may be designed into a cryptographic accelerator; however, adding more memory to a cryptographic accelerator may reduce the amount of other functionality that may be included and/or increase the cost.  
30

Cryptographic processors and/or other types of signal processors and integrated circuits may use a hardware-based random number generator. Various conventional methods may be used to retrieve random numbers from an integrated circuit incorporating a random number generator. One method is for the random number generator to provide one or more data registers that a host processor may read to obtain random numbers. The host processor may tell the random number generator to provide more random data before or after retrieving random data from the registers. The random number generator may generate the random data in the background so that random data may be available when needed by the host processor.

Another method for obtaining random data is for the host processor to request a sample of random data from the random number generator. The host processor may provide the random number generator with a request that specifies an amount of random data and a location in memory where the random data should be placed. The random number generator may then generate the random data and transfer the random data to the requested location in the background.

Unfortunately, by providing random data through data registers on the random number generator or other integrated circuit chip, any buffer management that may be desired is generally performed by the host processor. Moreover, the bus that connects the host processor with the random number generator may be used inefficiently because single data reads are typically used instead of block reads. If a host processor requests a block of random data, however, then the host processor may initiate the data transfers and any desired buffer management that may be desired is generally performed by the host processor. The foregoing operations may be performed in the background and/or a fast host processor may be used; however, a faster host processor may increase system costs.

#### SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Embodiments of the present invention provide cryptographic data processing systems, computer program products, and methods of operating same in which system memory is used to transfer information between a host processor and an adjunct processor. For example, in accordance with embodiments of the present invention, cryptographic data processing systems comprise a host processor, a system memory coupled to the host processor, and a cryptographic processor integrated circuit that

comprises a local memory. One or more operands are downloaded into the local memory from the system memory, using, for example, a load command, and one or more operations are performed on at least one of the downloaded operands to generate a result in the local memory. The result that is generated in the local memory is then  
5 stored in the system memory, using, for example, a store command. Advantageously, interaction between the host processor and the cryptographic processor may be reduced as the host processor need not consume processing time downloading operands to the cryptographic accelerator processor and/or uploading results from the cryptographic processor to system memory.

10 In accordance with further embodiments of the present invention, interaction between the host processor and the cryptographic processor may be further reduced and overall system performance improved by providing a command queue in the system memory, loading a command block into the command queue using the host processor, executing the command block using the cryptographic processor, and  
15 notifying the host processor that the command block has been executed. By loading commands into a command queue in the system memory where the cryptographic processor may retrieve them for processing, the host processor need not spend time interacting directly with the cryptographic processor.

In accordance with further embodiments of the present invention, the host  
20 processor may be notified that the command block has been executed in various ways. For example, the cryptographic processor may invoke an interrupt to notify the host processor that the command block has been executed. In particular embodiments, the interrupt may be invoked if the host processor has requested notification via an interrupt in an interrupt field of the command block. In other embodiments, the  
25 cryptographic processor may update a completion field in the command block to notify the host processor that the command block has been executed. In still other embodiments, a periodic interrupt may be defined such that when the interrupt occurs the host processor reads the completion fields of any command blocks.

In accordance with still further embodiments of the present invention,  
30 improved utilization of the system memory may be attained by re-using at least a portion of a command block that contains input data to store a result or output that is generated by an adjunct processor, such as the cryptographic processor. For example, a command queue may be provided in the system memory and a command block may

be loaded into the command queue using the host processor. The command block comprises an input data field that contains input data. The adjunct processor performs an operation based on the input data to generate a result and this result is stored in the input data field such that at least a portion of the input data is overwritten.

- 5 Advantageously, the memory reserved for the command block in the system memory may be reduced because additional storage space need not be reserved to store the result of executing the command block either in the command block or elsewhere in the system memory.

- 10 Cryptographic processors and/or other types of signal processors and integrated circuits may use a hardware-based random number generator. In accordance with further embodiments of the present invention, random number samples may be provided for use by the host processor while reducing interaction between the host processor and the cryptographic processor. For example, a random number data queue in the system memory may be provided that has a read address and
- 15 a write address associated therewith. The cryptographic processor loads a random number sample into the random number data queue at the write address and the host processor reads the random number sample beginning at the read address. The host processor need only interact with the cryptographic processor to update the read address and to check the value of the write address when the read address approaches
- 20 the last value the host processor has for the write address. In addition, the cryptographic accelerator processor may manage the buffering of the random number samples, which may conserve processor cycles of the host processor.

#### BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

- 25 Other features of the present invention will be more readily understood from the following detailed description of specific embodiments thereof when read in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, in which:

- FIG. 1** is a block diagram that illustrates cryptographic data processing systems, computer program products, and methods of operating same in accordance
- 30 with embodiments of the present invention;

**FIG. 2** is a flowchart that illustrates operations of cryptographic data processing systems and computer program products in accordance with embodiments of the present invention;

**FIGS. 3 - 5** are block diagrams that illustrate functional execution units of a cryptographic accelerator processor in accordance with embodiments of the present invention;

**FIG. 6** is a flowchart that illustrates operations of cryptographic data processing systems and computer program products in accordance with further embodiments of the present invention;

**FIG. 7 - 8** are block diagrams that illustrate an encryption/authentication command queue and a public key command queue, respectively, in accordance with embodiments of the present invention;

**FIGS. 9 - 11** are flowcharts that illustrate operations of cryptographic data processing systems and computer program products in accordance with further embodiments of the present invention;

**FIGS. 12A - 12D** are block diagrams that illustrate command blocks in accordance with embodiments of the present invention;

**FIG. 13** is a flowchart that illustrates operations of cryptographic data processing systems and computer program products in accordance with further embodiments of the present invention;

**FIGS. 14A, 14B, and 15** are block diagrams that illustrate command blocks in accordance with further embodiments of the present invention;

**FIGS. 16 and 17** are flowcharts that illustrate operations of cryptographic data processing systems and computer program products in accordance with further embodiments of the present invention;

**FIG. 18** is a block diagram that illustrates a random number generator data queue in accordance with embodiments of the present invention;

**FIG. 19** is a flowchart that illustrates operations of cryptographic data processing systems and computer program products in accordance with further embodiments of the present invention;

**FIG. 20** is a block diagram that illustrates a command interface for a conventional application specific integrated circuit;

**FIG. 21** is a block diagram that illustrates parallel command interfaces for an application specific integrated circuit in accordance with embodiments of the present invention;

**FIG. 22** is a block diagram of a cryptographic accelerator processor in which command interface managers are respectively associated with functional execution units in accordance with embodiments of the present invention; and

**FIG. 23** is a flowchart that illustrates operations of cryptographic data processing systems and computer program products in accordance with further embodiments of the present invention.

#### DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

While the invention is susceptible to various modifications and alternative forms, specific embodiments thereof are shown by way of example in the drawings and will herein be described in detail. It should be understood, however, that there is no intent to limit the invention to the particular forms disclosed, but on the contrary, the invention is to cover all modifications, equivalents, and alternatives falling within the spirit and scope of the invention as defined by the claims. Like reference numbers signify like elements throughout the description of the figures. It will also be understood that when an element is referred to as being "connected" or "coupled" to another element, it can be directly connected or coupled to the other element or intervening elements may also be present. In contrast, when an element is referred to as being "directly connected" or "directly coupled" to another element, there are no intervening elements present.

The present invention may be embodied as methods, data processing systems, and/or computer program products. Accordingly, the present invention may be embodied in hardware and/or in software (including firmware, resident software, micro-code, *etc.*). Furthermore, the present invention may take the form of a computer program product on a computer-usable or computer-readable storage medium having computer-usable or computer-readable program code embodied in the medium for use by or in connection with an instruction execution system. In the context of this document, a computer-usable or computer-readable medium may be any medium that can contain, store, communicate, propagate, or transport the program for use by or in connection with the instruction execution system, apparatus, or device.

The computer-usable or computer-readable medium may be, for example but not limited to, an electronic, magnetic, optical, electromagnetic, infrared, or semiconductor system, apparatus, device, or propagation medium. More specific

examples (a nonexhaustive list) of the computer-readable medium would include the following: an electrical connection having one or more wires, a portable computer diskette, a random access memory (RAM), a read-only memory (ROM), an erasable programmable read-only memory (EPROM or Flash memory), an optical fiber, and a portable compact disc read-only memory (CD-ROM). Note that the computer-usable or computer-readable medium could even be paper or another suitable medium upon which the program is printed, as the program can be electronically captured, via, for instance, optical scanning of the paper or other medium, then compiled, interpreted, or otherwise processed in a suitable manner, if necessary, and then stored in a computer memory.

Referring now to **FIG. 1**, an exemplary cryptographic data processing system 12, in accordance with embodiments of the present invention, comprises a cryptographic accelerator processor 14, a host processor 16, a cache memory 18, a system memory 22, and a system bus controller 24, such as a north-bridge system controller. The system bus controller 24 couples the host processor 16 to the cache memory 18 and the system memory 22, and also couples the host processor 16 and the system memory 22 to the cryptographic accelerator processor 14 via a system bus 26, which may be, for example, a peripheral component interconnect (PCI) bus. The host processor 16 may be, for example, a commercially available or custom microprocessor. The system memory 22 is representative of an overall hierarchy of memory devices containing the software and data used to implement the functionality of the cryptographic data processing system 12. The system memory 22 may include, but is not limited to, the following types of devices: ROM, PROM, EPROM, EEPROM, flash, SRAM, and DRAM.

In accordance with embodiments of the present invention, the cryptographic accelerator processor 14 comprises a random number generator (RNG) execution unit 28, an encryption/authentication (E/A) execution unit 32, and a public key (PK) engine execution unit 34, which are coupled to a local memory 36 via a local bus 38. In accordance with particular embodiments of the present invention, the system memory 22 contains a random number (RN) data queue 42, an E/A command queue 44, a PK command queue 46, and data buffer(s) 47.

Although **FIG. 1** illustrates an exemplary cryptographic data processing system architecture, it will be understood that the present invention is not limited to



such a configuration, but is intended to encompass any configuration capable of carrying out operations described herein. Computer program code for carrying out operations of embodiments of the cryptographic data processing system **12** may be written in a high-level programming language, such as C or C++, for development  
5 convenience. Nevertheless, some modules or routines may be written in assembly language or even micro-code to enhance performance and/or memory usage. It will be further appreciated that the functionality of any or all of the program modules may also be implemented using discrete hardware components, a single application specific integrated circuit (ASIC), or a programmed digital signal processor or  
10 microcontroller.

The present invention is described hereinafter with reference to flowchart and/or block diagram illustrations of methods, data processing systems, and/or computer program products in accordance with exemplary embodiments of the invention. It will be understood that each block of the flowchart and/or block diagram  
15 illustrations, and combinations of blocks in the flowchart and/or block diagram illustrations, may be implemented by computer program instructions. These computer program instructions may be provided to a processor of a general purpose computer, a special purpose computer, or other programmable data processing apparatus to produce a machine, such that the instructions, which execute via the processor of the  
20 computer or other programmable data processing apparatus, create means for implementing the functions/acts specified in the flowchart and/or block diagram block or blocks.

These computer program instructions may also be stored in a computer usable or computer-readable memory that may direct a computer or other programmable data  
25 processing apparatus to function in a particular manner, such that the instructions stored in the computer usable or computer-readable memory produce an article of manufacture including instructions that implement the function/act specified in the flowchart and/or block diagram block or blocks.

The computer program instructions may also be loaded onto a computer or  
30 other programmable data processing apparatus to cause a series of operational steps to be performed on the computer or other programmable apparatus to produce a computer implemented process such that the instructions that execute on the computer

or other programmable apparatus provide steps for implementing the functions/acts specified in the flowchart and/or block diagram block or blocks.

Exemplary operations of cryptographic data processing systems, computer program products, and methods of operating same, in accordance with embodiments of the present invention, will be described hereafter. Referring now to **FIG. 2**, the host processor **16** loads a command block into one of the command queues **44** and **46** at block **52**. The cryptographic accelerator processor **14** may be notified by the host processor **16** that the command block is available for processing or may periodically access the command queues **44**, and/or **46** to determine if a command block is available for processing. The cryptographic accelerator processor **14** downloads the command block from one of the command queues **44** and **46** and executes the command block at block **54**. Once the cryptographic accelerator processor **14** completes execution of the command block, the host processor **16** is notified at block **56**. Thus, according to embodiments of the present invention, the host processor **16** need not spend time interacting directly with the cryptographic accelerator processor **14** (e.g., issuing a command to the cryptographic accelerator processor **14**, waiting for that command to complete, and then issuing another command). Instead, the host processor **16** may load commands into command queues **44** and **46**, which may then be processed in background by the cryptographic accelerator processor **14**. Moreover, the size and number of command block sequences may be less constrained because the availability of system memory is generally more abundant.

Referring now to **FIGS. 3 - 5**, the RNG execution unit **28**, the E/A execution unit **32**, and the PK engine execution unit **34** may use various registers that facilitate communication with the RN data queue **42** and the command queues **44** and **46**. For example, as shown in **FIG. 3**, a control/status register **62**, a RN data queue base address register **64**, a RN data queue size register **66**, and a RN data queue pointer register **68** may be defined for use by the RNG execution unit **28**. The control/status register **62** may include a self-test error field, which may be set if the RNG execution unit **28** generates two successive random number samples that are the same, and/or an error flag field, which may be used to notify the host processor **16** of an error on the system bus **26**. The RN data queue base address register **64** may be used to hold the base address of the RN data queue **42** in the system memory **22**. If the RN data queue

42 does not have a fixed size, then the RN data queue size register 66 may be used to hold the size of the RN data queue 42. The RN data queue pointer register 68 may comprise a read pointer 72 portion and a write pointer 74 portion, which may be used by the RNG execution unit 28 and the host processor 16 as will be discussed in more detail hereinafter.

As shown in FIG. 4, a control/status register 82, an E/A command queue base address register 84, an E/A command queue size register 86, and an E/A command queue pointer register 88 may be defined for use by the E/A execution unit 32. The control/status register 82 may include an interrupt flag field, which may be set if the host processor 16 requests an interrupt upon completion of a command block and/or if execution of a command block fails and/or an error flag field, which may be used to notify the host processor 16 of an error on the system bus 26. The E/A command queue base address register 84 may be used to hold the base address of the E/A command queue 44 in the system memory 22. If the E/A command queue 44 does not have a fixed size, then the E/A command queue size register 86 may be used to hold the size of the E/A command queue 44. The E/A command queue pointer register 88 may comprise a read pointer 92 portion and a write pointer 94 portion, which may be used by the E/A execution unit 32 and the host processor 16, respectively, as will be discussed in more detail hereinafter.

As shown in FIG. 5, a control/status register 102, a PK command queue base address register 104, a PK command queue size register 106, and a PK command queue pointer register 108 may be defined for use by the PK engine execution unit 34. The control/status register 102 may include an interrupt flag field, which may be set if the host processor 16 requests an interrupt upon completion of a command block and/or if execution of a command block fails and/or an error flag field, which may be used to notify the host processor 16 of an error on the system bus 26. The PK command queue base address register 104 may be used to hold the base address of the PK command queue 46 in the system memory 22. If the PK command queue 46 does not have a fixed size, then the PK command queue size register 106 may be used to hold the size of the PK command queue 46. The PK command queue pointer register 108 may comprise a read pointer 112 portion and a write pointer 114 portion, which

may be used by the PK engine execution unit 34 and the host processor 16, respectively, as will be discussed in more detail hereinafter.

Referring now to **FIG. 6**, operations for loading a command block into the E/A command queue 44 and/or the PK command queue 46, in accordance with  
5 embodiments of the present invention, will be described in more detail hereafter. In general, the host processor 16 writes commands into the command queues 44 and 46 beginning at write address locations stored in the write pointers for the respective command queues (e.g., write pointers 94 and 114). Before writing a command block into a command queue, however, the host processor determines at block 122 whether  
10 the write address plus the command block size equals the read address stored in the corresponding read pointer 92 or 112. If the result determined at block 122 is "Yes," then the host processor 16 postpones loading a new command block into the command queue until the cryptographic accelerator processor 14 has incremented the read address. If, however, the result determined at block 122 is "No," then the host  
15 processor 16 loads a command block into the command queue at block 124 at the write address associated with the command queue and then increments the write address at block 126 by an amount corresponding to the size of the loaded command block. The host processor 16 need not check the current read address every time a new command block is loaded. Instead, the host processor 16 may check the read  
20 address when the write address is getting close to the last value the host processor 16 has for the read address. Checking the read address may be expensive in terms of processor cycles consumed. By checking the read address only when the read address is getting close to the write address (e.g., within a predefined threshold), host processor 16 cycles may be conserved.

25 The foregoing operations are illustrated, for example, in **FIGS. 7** and **8**, which show embodiments of the E/A command queue 44 and the PK command queue 46, respectively. As shown in **FIGS. 7** and **8**, both the E/A command queue 44 and the PK command queue 46 are configured to hold m command blocks, which each comprise eight, thirty-two bit words. The host processor 16 has written a single  
30 command block into the first command block position (i.e., the "0" position) and the write address has been incremented to point to the next empty command block slot. The addresses used in **FIGS. 7** and **8** are based on command block slot numbers for

purposes of illustration. These addresses may be converted into absolute addresses by multiplying the command block slot number by 256 and adding the resulting product to the respective base addresses for the command queues, which are stored in the E/A command queue base address register **84** and the PK command queue base address register **104**, respectively. Note that the test used at block **122** of **FIG. 6** to determine whether a new command block may be loaded into a command queue implies that if a command queue may hold up to  $m$  command blocks, then only  $m - 1$  command blocks may be stored in the command queue at the same time.

Referring now to **FIG. 9**, operations for executing a command block that has been loaded into the E/A command queue **44** and/or the PK command queue **46**, in accordance with embodiments of the present invention, will be described in more detail hereafter. At block **132**, the cryptographic accelerator processor **14** determines whether the write address is equal to the read address. Specifically, the E/A execution unit **32** determines whether the write address is equal to the read address for the E/A command queue **44** and the PK engine execution unit **34** determines whether the write address is equal to the read address for the PK command queue **46**. If the result determined at block **132** is "Yes," then the cryptographic processor **14** waits until the host processor **16** loads a new command block into the command queue. If, however, the result determined at block **132** is "No," then the cryptographic accelerator processor **14** downloads the command block at the read address associated with the command queue and executes the command block at block **134**. In particular embodiments of the present invention, multiple command blocks may be downloaded for execution on the cryptographic accelerator processor **14** at the same time, which may further improve performance. The cryptographic accelerator processor **14** then increments the read address at block **136** by an amount corresponding to the size of the executed command block.

Returning to **FIGS. 7 and 8**, the read addresses are set to point to the first command block slot, which has been loaded with a command block by the host processor **16**. The E/A execution unit **32** and the PK engine execution unit **34** may read the command blocks loaded in the E/A command queue **44** and the PK command queue **46**, respectively, with only minimal interaction with the host processor **16**, *e.g.*, maintenance of the read pointers **92** and **112**, and the write pointers **94**, and **114**. In

general, the cryptographic accelerator processor 14 may continue to execute commands located in a circular command queue in system memory until the read address equals the write address for that command queue.

In accordance with further embodiments of the present invention, interaction  
5 between the host processor 16 and the cryptographic accelerator processor 14 may be further reduced and overall system performance improved by including load and store commands in the cryptographic accelerator processor's command set. Referring now to FIG. 10, a load command loads one or more operands from the system memory 22 (e.g., the data buffer(s) 47) to the local memory 36 at block 142. The cryptographic  
10 accelerator processor 14 then performs one or more operations on the operand(s) at block 144 to generate a result that is stored in the local memory 36. A store command then stores the result in the system memory 22 at block 146. Advantageously, the host processor 16 need not consume processing time downloading operands to the cryptographic accelerator processor 14 and/or uploading results from the  
15 cryptographic accelerator processor 14 into the system memory 22.

To improve utilization of the chip area used to implement the cryptographic accelerator processor 14, at least a portion of the operands downloaded from the system memory 22 may be stored in the local memory 36. Instead of using a register number to identify the location of operands and results, an offset is used that identifies  
20 the relative position of the operands and results in the local memory 36. For example, to perform the operation "a + b = c," a cryptographic accelerator processor 14 instruction may indicate that "a" is at offset 0 relative to a base address of the local memory 36, "b" is at offset 8 relative to the base address of the local memory 36, and the result "c" should be placed at offset 122 relative to the base address of the local  
25 memory 36. In accordance with further embodiments of the present invention, the result generated in the local memory 36 may also be stored in a result field of a command block, which is located in one of the command queues 44 and 46 in the system memory 22. Advantageously, operands and results may be packed together into the local memory 36, which may conserve storage space. Because there is no  
30 wasted space in storing the operands and results in the local memory 36, memory utilization may be improved. If the cryptographic accelerator processor 14 needs to be

redesigned to handle larger operands, then the local memory 36 may be easier to resize than resizing several registers.

In accordance with further embodiments of the present invention, interaction between the host processor 16 and the cryptographic accelerator processor 14 may be further reduced and overall system performance improved by allowing the cryptographic accelerator processor 14 to inform the host processor 16 when command blocks have been executed. Referring now to FIG. 11, the host processor 16 loads a command block into one of the command queues 44 and 46 at block 152. As shown in FIG. 12A, the command block may include an interrupt field, which may be set by the host processor 16 to turn an interrupt request on or off. The cryptographic accelerator processor 14 downloads the command block from one of the command queues 44 and 46 and executes the command block at block 154. The cryptographic accelerator processor 14 may optionally store error information in the command block as shown in FIG. 12B at block 156. The error information may comprise information that is associated with downloading the command block to the cryptographic accelerator processor 14 and/or executing the command block on the cryptographic accelerator processor 14. At block 158, if an interrupt has been requested in the interrupt field of the command block, then the cryptographic accelerator processor 14 invokes an interrupt to notify the host processor 16 that the command block has completed.

In other embodiments of the present invention, instead of invoking an interrupt to notify the host processor 16 that a command block has been executed, the cryptographic accelerator processor 14 may update a completion field in the command block as shown in FIG. 12C. In addition, a periodic interrupt may be defined that upon each occurrence triggers the host processor 16 to check one or more of the command queues 44 and 46 to determine whether any of the command blocks stored therein have been executed by examining their completion fields. In still other embodiments of the present invention, the cryptographic accelerator processor 14 may store the results from executing a command block in the command block as shown in FIG. 12D.

In still other embodiments of the present invention, the host processor 16 may set a timer when storing a command block into a command queue 42, 44. Upon

expiration of the timer, the host processor **16** may check to determine whether the command block has been executed. Advantageously, the status of a command block may be determined by the host processor **16** without the need to process an interrupt from the cryptographic accelerator processor **14**.

5           In accordance with further embodiments of the present invention, improved utilization of the system memory **22** may be attained by re-using at least a portion of a command block that contains input data to store a result or output that is generated by an adjunct processor, such as the cryptographic accelerator processor **14**, upon  
10           executing the command block. It is assumed that the size of the result or output is small enough to fit into the portion of the command block containing the input data that is to be overwritten. In addition, the region of the command block in which the result or output is stored should be selected carefully to ensure that the input data that is overwritten is no longer needed by the host processor **16** after the command block has been executed by the adjunct processor.

15           Referring now to **FIG. 13**, exemplary operations begin at block **162** where the host processor loads a command block that includes input data into one of the command queues **44** or **46** in the system memory **22**. Note that that instead of or in addition to including input data into the command block, the command block may include pointers to input data that reside, for example, in the data buffer(s) **47** in the  
20           system memory **22**. An adjunct processor, such as the cryptographic accelerator processor **14**, may download the command block and perform one or more operations on the input data to generate a result at block **164**. If the command block includes pointers to input data, then the data are separately downloaded to the cryptographic accelerator processor **14** using the input data pointers. The result is then stored in the  
25           command block in the system memory **22** at block **166** such that at least a portion of the input data is overwritten. Advantageously, the memory reserved for the command block in the system memory **22** may be reduced because additional storage space need not be reserved to store the result of executing the command block either in the command block or elsewhere in the system memory **22**.

30           The foregoing operations are illustrated by way of example in **FIGS. 14A** and **14B**, which show an exemplary command block for decrypting an encrypted packet. Specifically, in **FIG. 14A**, a command block is shown that comprises a field that



contains a hash key for the encrypted packet and another field that contains input information. The cryptographic accelerator processor 14 downloads the command block of FIG. 14A and performs hash operations using the hash key and input information to generate a hash value. As shown in FIG. 14B, this hash value is then  
5 stored in the command block in the system memory 22 by overwriting the input information, which is no longer needed once the hash value has been computed. Note that the input information may be one or more pointers to input data stored, for example, in the data buffer(s) 47 in the system memory 22.

In accordance with further embodiments of the present invention illustrated in  
10 FIG. 15, the command block may include an input pointer field and/or an output pointer field, which are used to identify the location of the encrypted packet in the system memory 22 and the location where the decrypted packet is to be stored in the system memory 22. For example, the cryptographic accelerator processor 14 may use the input pointer to download the encrypted packet from the system memory 22 and  
15 may then decrypt the encrypted packet using the hash key and input information to generate a hash value as discussed hereinabove. Note that the input information may be one or more pointers to input data stored, for example, in the data buffer(s) 47 in the system memory 22. The hash value may be attached to the decrypted packet and the decrypted packet with the attached hash value may be stored in the system  
20 memory 22 at the address identified by the output pointer field in the command block.

Cryptographic processors and/or other types of signal processors and integrated circuits may use a hardware-based random number generator. The cryptographic accelerator processor 14 may include a RNG execution unit 28 that may be used to generate random numbers for use by other execution units of the  
25 cryptographic accelerator processor 14 and/or the host processor 16. Exemplary operations that may be used to reduce interaction between the host processor 16 and the cryptographic accelerator processor 14 and to improve overall system performance will be described hereafter. Referring now to FIG. 16, operations begin at block 172 where the cryptographic accelerator processor 14 loads a random number sample into  
30 the RN data queue 42 beginning at the write address stored in the write pointer field 74 of the RN data queue pointer register 68 (see FIG. 3). At block 174 the host processor 16 reads the random number sample in the RN data queue 42 beginning at

the read address stored in the read pointer field 72 of the RN data queue pointer register 68 (see FIG. 3). Thus, according to embodiments of the present invention, the host processor 16 need not spend time interacting directly with the cryptographic accelerator processor 14 to request blocks of random data and/or reading random data from, for example, one or more registers on the cryptographic accelerator processor 14 chip.

Referring now to FIG. 17, operations for loading a random number sample into the RN data queue 42, in accordance with embodiments of the present invention, will be described in more detail hereafter. Before writing a random number sample into the RN data queue 42, the cryptographic accelerator processor 14 determines at block 182 whether the write address plus the random number sample size equals the read address stored in the read pointer field 72. If the result determined at block 182 is "Yes," then the cryptographic processor 14 postpones loading a new random number sample into the RN data queue 42 until the host processor 16 has incremented the read address. If, however, the result determined at block 182 is "No," then the cryptographic processor 14 loads a random number sample into the RN data queue 42 at block 184 at the write address stored in the write pointer field 74 and then increments the write address at block 186 by an amount corresponding to the size of the loaded random number sample.

Note that in accordance with embodiments of the present invention, the cryptographic processor 14 may include a register and/or may recognize a command block that may be written to the cryptographic processor 14 that allows the host processor 16 to, for example, provide the cryptographic processor 14 with a random number seed and/or instruct the cryptographic processor 14 to begin generating random numbers.

The foregoing operations are illustrated, for example, in FIG. 18, which shows an exemplary embodiment of the RN data queue 42. As shown in FIG. 18, the RN data queue 42 is configured to hold 512 random number samples, which each comprise 64 bits. The cryptographic processor 14 has written four random number samples into addresses 1 through 4 and the write address has been incremented to point to the next available address, which is empty or contains data that have already been read by the host processor 16. The addresses shown in FIG. 18 are based on

random number sample units for purposes of illustration. These addresses may be converted into absolute addresses by multiplying the random number sample number by 64 and adding the resulting product to the respective base address for the RN data queue 42, which is stored in the RN data queue base address register 64. Note that the

5 test used at block 182 of FIG. 17 to determine whether a new random number sample may be loaded into the RN data queue 42 implies that if the RN data queue 42 may hold up to m random number samples, then only m - 1 random number samples may be stored in the RN data queue 42 at the same time. Thus, if the RN data queue 42 is filled to its capacity, then it may hold 32,704 bits (511, 64-bit random number

10 samples), which exceeds the 20,000 bits required by the Federal Information Processing Standard (FIPS) 140-1, Security Requirements for Cryptographic Modules issued January 11, 1994.

Referring now to FIG. 19, operations for reading a command block that has been loaded into the RN data queue 42, in accordance with embodiments of the

15 present invention, will be described in more detail hereafter. At block 192, the host processor 16 determines whether the write address is equal to the read address. If the result determined at block 192 is "Yes," then the host processor 16 waits until the cryptographic accelerator processor 14 loads a new random number sample into the RN data queue 42. If, however, the result determined at block 192 is "No," then the

20 host processor 16 reads the random number sample at the read address stored in the read pointer field 72 at block 194. The host processor 16 then increments the read address at block 196 by an amount corresponding to the size of the random number sample. The host processor 16 need not check the current write address every time a new random number sample is read. Instead, the host processor 16 may check the

25 write address when the read address is getting close to the last value the host processor 16 has for the write address.

Thus, according to embodiments of the present invention, a cryptographic accelerator processor 14 may provide random number samples for use by a host processor 16 with reduced interaction between the host processor 16 and the

30 cryptographic accelerator processor 14. In general, the host processor 14 need only interact with the cryptographic accelerator processor 14 to update the read address and to check the value of the write address when the read address approaches the last

value the host processor 14 has for the write address. In addition, the cryptographic accelerator processor 14 may manage the buffering of the random number samples, which may conserve processor cycles of the host processor 16 and may reduce transactions on the system bus 26, which may improve overall system performance.

5           The performance of cryptographic data processing systems may be affected by the system architecture and the methodology used to perform operations. For example, conventional cryptographic data processing systems may comprise one or more ASICs, such as the ASIC 202 shown in FIG. 20. The ASIC 202 comprises a plurality of functional units 204, 206, and 208, which are configured to perform  
10       specific operations. As shown in FIG. 20, however, input commands are provided to the ASIC 202 serially and then routed to the appropriate functional unit 204, 206, and/or 208. The outputs and/or results of executing the input commands are provided serially as command outputs from the ASIC 202. Thus, the ASIC 202 typically processes commands sequentially such that a first command must finish before a  
15       subsequent command may be processed even if the commands are executed by different functional units.

          Referring now to FIG. 21, the performance of cryptographic data processing systems may be improved, in accordance with embodiments of the present invention, by providing separate command interfaces that are respectively associated with the  
20       functional units such that each functional unit may receive command inputs and may generate command outputs and/or results independently of other functional units. As shown in FIG. 21, an ASIC 212 includes a plurality of functional units 214, 216, and 218, which each receive command inputs through its own command interface and generate outputs and/or results that may be communicated to another processor  
25       through the command interface. By associating a separate command interface with each functional unit 214, 216, and 218, the functional units 214, 216, and 218 may operate independently and in parallel, thereby improving the performance of a cryptographic data processing system.

          Referring now to FIG. 22, the functional units 214, 216, and 218 may  
30       comprise the E/A execution unit 32, the RNG execution unit 28, and the PK engine execution unit 34. The E/A execution unit 32 comprises a command interface manager 222, the RNG execution unit 28 comprises a command interface manager

224, and the PK engine execution unit 34 comprises a command interface manager 226. These respective command interface managers 222, 224, and 226 may be used to receive input command blocks from the E/A command queue 44, to transmit random number samples to the RN data queue 42, and to receive input command blocks from the PK command queue 46, respectively, and to allow the respective execution units 28, 32, and 34 to perform operations in parallel.

Referring now to FIG. 23, operations of cryptographic data processing systems in which command interface managers are respectively associated with a plurality of functional units, in accordance with embodiments of the present invention, will be described hereafter. Operations begin at block 232 where one or more command blocks are provided to each of the functional units, such as, for example, by providing command blocks in the E/A command queue 44 and the PK command queue 46 for the E/A execution unit 32 and the PK engine execution unit 34, respectively. At block 234, the command blocks are simultaneously executed by the functional units by accessing the command blocks in parallel through, for example, the command interface manager 222 and the command interface manager 226, which are associated with the E/A execution unit 32 and the PK engine execution unit 34, respectively.

Note that command blocks may be provided to the cryptographic processor 14 in serial fashion over the system bus 24. Nevertheless, the cryptographic processor 14 may distribute command blocks to the command interface managers 222, 224, and 226 associated with the execution units 32, 28, and 34, which may then process the command blocks in parallel.

For purposes of illustration, exemplary embodiments of the present invention have been discussed hereinabove in which operations related to random number generation, encryption/authentication, and public key generation are performed in parallel based on functional units defined therefor. It will be understood that the operations that may be performed in parallel may be adjusted based on requirements and/or needs. Moreover, commands may be provided to the command interface managers in a variety of ways. A processor may write commands directly to the command interface managers or, alternatively, commands may be stored in a memory and the command interface managers may be provided with the addresses where they may retrieve the stored commands for execution.

In summary, by performing operations in parallel using a plurality of functional units, the total number of operations that may be performed may be increased and the average latency for completing operations may be reduced.

5 The flowcharts of **FIGS. 2, 6, 9 - 11, 13, 16, 17, 19, and 23** illustrate the architecture, functionality, and operations of possible embodiments of the cryptographic data processing system **12** of **FIG. 1**. In this regard, each block may represent a module, segment, or portion of code, which comprises one or more executable instructions for implementing the specified logical function(s). It should also be noted that in some alternative embodiments, the functions noted in the blocks  
10 may occur out of the order noted in **FIGS. 2, 6, 9 - 11, 13, 16, 17, 19, and 23**. For example, two blocks shown in succession may in fact be executed substantially concurrently or the blocks may sometimes be executed in the reverse order, depending on the functionality involved.

In concluding the detailed description, it should be noted that many variations  
15 and modifications can be made to the preferred embodiments without substantially departing from the principles of the present invention. All such variations and modifications are intended to be included herein within the scope of the present invention, as set forth in the following claims.